

Christian Community

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THE SOCIAL TASK OF THE CHURCH

By Vere V. Loper

At the time of the American Revolution, the preachers did not hesitate to preach politics. They preached election day sermons and they were not mere exhortations to "vote as you please, but vote." They were leaders in a nation struggling toward freedom, and their pulpits rang with that moral issue in its political expression. John Adams observed that anyone wishing to know where "the principles and feelings which produced the Revolution had been derived needed simply to study Pastor Mayhew's sermon on passive disobedience and resistance." In short, Adams says that we are a country today partially because New England Congregational preachers in revolutionary days preached politics and used their churches for political purposes. I have never believed in partisan politics from the pulpit, but moral issues arise still which are above partisan politics. Then the time comes for social action which is *political action*.

In the 1870's when millions of American laboring men were working for seven days a week and twelve hours a day, a Congregational preacher in Ohio—Washington Gladden—felt the time had come to call a halt. He lifted his powerful voice for forty years in his great church in Columbus in protest against the treatment of labor. He gained allies, but he did not win an immediate victory. When I went to Montana in 1921, I was asked by an Anaconda Copper Mine official to fight a law then before the Montana Legislature to do away with the seven-day week and the twelve hour day in the mines and mills of that great corporation. Yes, that was yesterday, and sometimes today we need to be protected against the unions which grew out of conditions of that type. But conditions of labor and management call for social action on behalf of God's

children in the *industrial order*.

Our Pilgrim Fathers were middle class people who envied the nobility of England only their education. They immediately set up schools which expanded rapidly . . . and became the foundation of American life. Today these schools are assaulted in their primary position by many forces. *Education* is an area of social action, and we are committed to all that is for the good of American schools.

In 1894 Graham Taylor left comfortable academic halls and went to Chicago to teach young preachers. He was appalled by the conditions which poverty produced in the slums of Chicago. He thought the Church ought to do something about it. He established Chicago Commons, the first settlement house in the United States. It was not an answer to poverty. Perhaps this will never be found, but Christians will send their souls through the earth to give everything which will strike at its basic roots and at the same time do all possible to alleviate the misery of its awful fruits. And poverty calls for Christian social action aimed at *changed social conditions*—not merely saving a few out of the maelstrom of poverty which sucks men down to destruction.

Some early New Englanders made money trading in slaves and seemed to have no qualms of conscience about their awful trade. But others were sensitive at an early day to what we were doing to the Negro. One of them was Samuel Hopkins, first pastor of the Church at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where I started my ministry. . . . The word against slavery gathered power. It almost split the Church, but Christians thought it was more important to speak God's word about the dignity of man than to keep churches

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Marriage and Freedom Concern General Synod

Christian social action will be before the meeting of the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church in a big way, when it meets at Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio, June 17 to 24. In recommendations concerning three overtures referred to it by the General Synod of 1950, the Commission on Christian Social Action is proposing that the denomination adopt a statement on inter-faith marriage, petition for the inclusion of ministers in federal Old Age and Survivors' Insurance, and continue the existing Peace Fellowship as an unofficial group rather than recognize it as an official body, as requested by two synods.

The Commission is also suggesting support of the United Nations and opposition to efforts such as the Bricker amendment which would limit the power of the United States to make treaties to strengthen human rights. Its report expresses concern over the attacks upon civil liberties and the threat to free communication of ideas. It urges changes in the McCarran-Walter Act and further action in race relations.

On Friday evening, June 19th, in Heidelberg's new Seiberling Gymnasium the Commission on Christian Social Action in cooperation with the Commission on Evangelism will offer a visual and dramatic presentation of the church's witness to the Lordship of Christ in human relationships individual and social. A cordial invitation is extended to all friends in the area to be present for this special General Synod event.

Our Feature Article

DR. VERE V. LOPER, Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Berkeley, California, is a former Moderator of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches. The accompanying article is part of a sermon on "The Social Task of the Church."



International Relations Letter

April 8, 1953

Encouraged by the many requests for the packets on the UN, UNESCO and Human Rights (the supply of these is exhausted) the International Relations Department of the C. S. A. has assembled a new packet containing almost thirty pieces—booklets, leaflets, mimeographed material. Covering the general field, the packet puts special emphasis on the United Nations and contains several items particularly designed to answer criticisms. Send one dollar to the writer of this letter—to cover cost of materials and postage—at 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

Shall We Shake Hands?

Shake hands with Vishinsky? No, says Ambassador Lodge—not unless Mr. Vishinsky approaches him first with outstretched hands! One of my good friends thinks this is an un-Christian attitude. Frankly, the matter does not seem important. What is important is an attitude toward communist leaders—especially toward the new leaders and the new “line”—which combines steady awareness of the real character of communist purposes with eagerness (not simply willingness!) to reach agreements and lower the tension wherever possible. What is the communist purpose? To establish on a world-wide scale essentially the kind of society that exists in Russia today. This involves far more than abolishing “the private ownership of the means of production.” It means the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” which is to say, the dictatorship of a small group within a political party constituting a small minority of citizens. It means an official hostility to revealed religion, even though religious worship may be tolerated. At best, it means government for the people by a self-constituted group of leaders. It means the rejection of the view of man as a child of God which is, finally, the only real basis for civil and political liberties.

No real communist can believe in the possibility of the peaceful co-existence of his kind of society and the kind you and I basically believe in. The communist is committed to the destruction of the latter and the triumph of the former. When he admits the possibility of a peaceful and cooperative relation-

ship he ceases to be a Marxist-Leninist communist. The New Testament does not require that we close our eyes to such facts. And when your neighbor puts you down as a liar and deceiver it could be argued that to shake hands with him is to degrade an act connoting mutual trust.

On the other hand, there is no such thing as a 100% right or a 100% wrong national policy. Even if there were, the right would not necessarily, or even probably, be established by such rigid opposition to the wrong as must ultimately lead to all-out war. Holding to the conviction that between the communist and democratic-Christian ways of life there is elemental and permanent contradiction, we must keep in mind the following possibilities:

1. Communist leaders may decide that, in this or that part of the world or in the world as a whole, their present aggressive programs cannot be successful. This would provide openings for at least temporary lessening of the tension, for settlement of specific aspects of the essential conflict. We should seize every such opportunity, provided always we are on guard against the possibility that the communist leadership is making a concession at one point only in order to further its aims at another point. Their willingness, for example, to settle the fighting in Korea *could* mean that they need the strength being expended there for an attack elsewhere.

2. The United States and its allies, but particularly the United States, could permit their desirable opposition to communism, with the attendant building of military strength, to reach the point of a fear and a fanaticism which would make it virtually impossible to lessen the tension, even if the communists sincerely desired it. A combination of fear, of infatuation with military power, of frustrated goodwill, and of national self-righteousness could transform the American people from a peace-wanting and peace-making nation into an obstacle to peace. It is this blindly plunging kind of anti-communism which makes the spirit of McCarthyism so dangerous, although happily the Sena-

tor has not up to now given much attention to foreign policy. McCarthyism, operating in the area of foreign policy, would certainly have dangerous results.

To put it in a sentence, Americans are now called upon to handle the communist business with an almost superhuman combination of wariness and outstretched hand. We must hope that with a new regime in Russia and with a new administration in the United States (which is probably in a better position than the preceding administration to go half-way because it will not so quickly be accused of softness toward communism) there is a better chance of local and temporary, and perhaps universal and permanent moves away from the decade of cold war.

Herman F. Reissig

In Defense of Freedom

There have been several notable reactions to the overstepping of their proper limits by Congressional committees. In February, Mrs. Agnes E. Meyer delivered a convincing address on “Freedom of the Mind” before the American Association of School Administrators, copies of which are available from the National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

On March 11 the General Board of the National Council of Churches adopted a statement on Congressional Investigations of Communism which warned against unfair treatment of witnesses, circulation of unsupported charges, and interference with local control of schools. It called for a Committee on the Maintenance of American Freedom to watch developments that threaten our freedom “whether through denying the basic right of freedom of thought, through Communist infiltration, or wrong methods of meeting that infiltration.

* * * *

Among those outraged by Congressman Velde's threat to investigate the churches was the Reverend Arpad Beretz, pastor of the Evangelical and Reformed Church at Wallingford, Connecticut. In two letters to the Editor of the *Meriden Record*, he emphasized the danger to the church's freedom and to the reputation of our democratic institutions, raising the question whether Mr. Velde and his friends are “acting out of ignorance or according to well organized plans” intended to discredit religion and divide the American people.

A LETTER ON RACE RELATIONS

NOTE: In place of a staff contribution on Church and Race, we are glad to give space to the following letter from a reader. Mr. Shinn is an Evangelical and Reformed layman, a graduate of Heidelberg College, with a number of years' experience in the United States Department of Labor. He comments on the January, 1953, issue.

I have read the article in CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY on race relations in the E and R colleges with interest. I am glad to see an article outlining the progress which is being made in this field. I believe, however, that the article is misleading in two respects.

First, the entire emphasis of the article on *race relations* is on *Negro students* . . . The problem of race relations is far broader than Negroes and Caucasians. The Board of Foreign Missions can testify far more eloquently than I to the fact that the Church was working in the field of race relations long before ". . . the Fall of 1947, when the Evangelical and Reformed Church (according to the article) began its race-relations program . . ." So can many E and R Church ministers and many of the women's organizations who have worked long and hard on exchange and group projects.

Considering the subject in its true perspective leads me to the second aspect of the article which I believe leaves the reader with the wrong impression. In discussing Heidelberg College the author states: "Neither can it be said that the administration (Heidelberg) was sufficiently aware of the need to project a program specifically designed to attract Negroes . . ." Later in the article, after discussing activities on the campus since 1947 involving Negroes, the author concludes: "These projects, together with several other developments, have brought Heidelberg to a front-running position among church-related colleges striving to become genuinely inclusive institutions."

I respectfully submit that Heidelberg College not only is in a "front-running position" with respect to race relations but has been for many years before 1947. Heidelberg College has always been interracial minded. It has had many Japanese and Chinese students on its rosters . . . While the progress of the first Negro student in other E and R colleges was carefully noted in the article the ten or more Negro students who had attended Heidelberg College before 1947 were passed off with the sentence, "Heidelberg College, in spite of a long history of 'open policy' had no Negro students at this time." Inciden-

tally, there was a Negro student at Heidelberg in the Fall of 1947.

When I wrote to Heidelberg to obtain the exact number of non-Caucasians who had attended the college, back came the answer, "We can't tell you—our records do not show what an individual's race is." Such a record system is not the result of lack of interest in race relations, but on the contrary is evidence of Heidelberg's basic policy of welcoming all who qualify academically.

I don't know what standards were used to assume that Heidelberg did not

have a "program specifically designed to attract Negroes." Those Negroes who attended Heidelberg before 1947 didn't enroll just because they heard the name Heidelberg somewhere. Somebody went out and convinced them that Heidelberg did have a program which was attractive to them. Somebody worked long and hard to make the adjustments which inevitably followed on the campus. That somebody was the Administration of Heidelberg College and the students on the campus.

There has been no change in the policy at Heidelberg since 1947. Heidelberg is merely continuing its old policy of applying Christian principles in the field of higher education. Those principles have been applied equally to individuals of different races, different nationalities, and different religions.

John C. Shinn

More About Social Security

In response to an inquiry from a reader asking for an explanation of the figure \$1,067 cited as an example of benefit payments in his article on "Ministers and Social Security" which appeared in the March issue of CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, Mr. Schlegel writes:

Let us suppose that a worker who has a salary of \$3600 per year began in January, 1953, to pay one and a half percent of his income into the federal government's Old Age and Survivors' Insurance Fund. His employer pays a similar amount in his behalf. If this worker becomes 65 before July, 1954, he may retire as soon as he has been covered by OASI for six quarters, or eighteen months. He may then claim monthly social security benefits of \$59.28 for himself and half that amount for his wife if she also is 65 or older. This would mean an annual family benefit of \$1067, and it would be tax free.

If such a worker's employment had been "covered" for a longer period his retirement benefits would be somewhat higher, but they could never exceed \$85, for himself, nor \$42.50 for his wife. Upon his death his widow would be assured of a lump payment of three times the amount of her husband's monthly benefit, and, thereafter, a monthly benefit equal to seventy-five percent of her husband's benefit.

The formula for determining the amount of benefit is fairly simple: total the amount of salary received during the period of coverage; divide this amount by the total number of months from January, 1953, to the time of retirement. This will give you the average monthly income on which benefits are

computed. The monthly benefits will be \$55 on the first \$100 of average income, plus 15% of the remainder up to \$200.

It should be noted that persons attaining the age of 65 between July 1954 and December 1954 will need to belong to OASI for seven quarters, or twenty-one months. Subsequent to 1954 the coverage period will have to be even longer before retirement benefits may be claimed. The law provides that by 1971 a worker will need to have forty quarters of coverage before becoming fully insured in the OASI plan.

F. Nelsen Schlegel.

ECONOMIC LIFE

If you are one of that fortunately decreasing number whose mental image of a labor representative is that of a burly, beetle-browed, tough, ungrammatical and unreasonable "furriner" Lucy Randolph Mason's story of her experiences in the CIO, entitled *To Win These Rights* (Harper, \$3; paper-bound edition available at \$1.25 from CIO, 718 Jackson Place, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.), will shock you—as it should. Not that every union official is a gracious Virginia lady with three signers of the Declaration of Independence, the author of the Virginia Dec-

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together—and the Church became basically anti-slavery. A few abolitionists, who were not satisfied with the speed at which others were going, established the great chain of Negro colleges which has been the most powerful factor to date in Negro education. Notable progress has been made, but on Lincoln's birthday we consecrate ourselves anew to the unfinished task in race relationships, hoping "the white race will join the human race before it is too late." The effort to enable all people to live together as one family is not only *race relations* but social action.

The effort to achieve peace is at least as old as Micah prophesying that "men shall beat their swords into ploughshares." We have not taken the assignment too seriously, however, until recently. As early as 1828 William Ladd—a Congregational clergyman—led in the formation of the American Peace Society. He could not have been too far "off the beam" for his major essay was titled, "An Essay on a Congress of Nations." The movement grew slowly but has come to white heat as two World Wars followed each other and Korea kept us in conflict. Now we know that the peace effort must encompass all the intertwined social, political, and economic forces of the world. To the building of *peace* everyone dedicates himself as a Christian. This is perhaps our most important and all-inclusive area of social action.

* * * *

But in the final analysis these high social objectives will never be realized apart from the devoted loyalty of the individual Christians at every point where something can be achieved for the Kingdom of God on earth. It is the individuals who have a deep concern that the words of their Master be applied to the social as well as the individual scene which will alone make

it possible for the Church to accomplish its task. The qualities which the individuals must have are many. Let us, however, point out a few which are imperative in this day.

As Christians we need to achieve a love for our country which is deep and sincere but one which holds it constantly before the judgment of God. America will be used for the Kingdom of God by those who love her. We are proud when America rushes to the aid of a distressed people as we today give aid to flooded Holland. But our country must ever be held before God's judgment when we witness such incidents as the murder of a Korean Church leader by an American army officer, and his punishment is but two years of hard labor. Too many lives and too much of America has been given for great and noble purposes for us to rest content with such flaws. We must love her enough to hold her ever before God's judgment.

We must stand up for the civil rights even of those whom we suspect and dislike. When a word is spoken now for civil rights of communists in America it is protested. Many want our country to keep communists as silent here as we criticize Russia for enforcing silence on non-communists behind the iron curtain. This is the hottest issue today. For his words in this field, your minister and anyone else who speaks on behalf of protecting American civil rights are frequently criticized. Christians must be among those who insist that America be different from Russia in its protection of freedom of speech and the other civil rights of those with whom we cannot agree.

Christians concerned with the social task of the Church must realize that we have standards at race levels which we are not at liberty to ignore. Two men no longer with us were once discussing the affairs of this church in a social conversation in my presence. One inquired, "What will we do if the Negroes are moving around the church?" The other man replied, "We won't do anything. We can't. After all, we are a church." Yes, after all, we are a church, and our Christianity must govern our conduct in seeing that every man, regardless of race or creed, is treated as an individual before God.

As Christians we must work for world citizenship on every possible level.

It is not easy now when so many are returning to a provincialism and an isolation which characterized yesterday. The time has come to hold the line against those who begin to attack the United Nations and prohibit the educational processes of UNESCO as they try to raise children who not only love America but are consciously citizens of the world.

As Christians we will never achieve our social objectives unless our devotion to world peace deepens and increases. Of course we must be realistic about this world and its needs for security. But our business is not arms but men and ideals. Our function is to keep faith alive so that peace can be achieved. Our business is to win the war of Christian ideals that others may not be reduced to the war of arms.

God grant that our contribution to the social task of the Church in our generation will enable us to stand before an Amos and say—"Yes, we know God is a God of justice. We have heard His voice and we have been obedient to the heavenly vision."

ECONOMIC LIFE

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laration of Rights, Chief Justice Marshall, numerous Episcopal clergymen and sundry Confederate notables in her family tree! But against that background her efforts to secure simple justice and freedom to organize in her native South has a meaning that cannot be set down as Yankee interference.

Miss Mason gives some interesting sketches of labor leaders who were active in the Southern drive, and tells some revealing stories of lawlessness and violence abetted by law-enforcement officers. Yet with it all she reveals a lack of bitterness and a devotion to democracy that is a triumph of her Christian faith.

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The National Religion and Labor Foundation, pioneer inter-faith organization working for better understanding between labor and religious groups, has recently elected the Reverend Witherpoon Dodge as its Executive Director. Mr. Dodge formerly served as Associate Director under the Reverend Joseph Merchant who resigned to join the staff of the National Council of Churches. The Foundation office is now at 3392 North High St., Columbus 14, Ohio.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Additional copies may be obtained for 2½ cents each. Requests from Congregational Christians should be addressed to Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Requests by Evangelical and Reformed, and others, as well as news items and communications, should be addressed to the Editor, Huber F. Klemme, Commission on Christian Social Action, 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio.